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LA ZAD: ANOTHER END OF THE WORLD IS POSSIBLE

NONPOLITICS AUTHORITARIAN CAPITALISM, AUTONOMIE, COMMUNES, INSURRECTION, LA ZAD, SELBSTVERVALTUNG, STATE

On January 17, 2018, the French government announced on television, via the voice of Prime Minister Edouard Philippe, that it had given up on pursuing the highly controversial project of building a new airport at Notre-Dame-des-Landes (NDDL). This decision capped five decades of political, economic, legal, environmental, and personal struggle. The airport was to be located approximately 30 kilometers north of the city of Nantes in western France; instead, the site became la ZAD—the *Zone a Défendre* (Zone To Defend). What began as a small protest camp grew into a world-famous space of autonomous experimentation that lasted almost nine years.

At the very moment we are publishing this article, a massive police operation has invaded the ZAD to evict it. The French government was prepared to lose the fight to build an airport, but no state willingly cedes autonomy to anyone within its territory. The ZAD's moment of triumph as a single-issue struggle may have spelled its doom as a space of contagious freedom.

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